

SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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FOOD FACTS

Plentiful Foods. Easter may have come and gone, but eggs still hold the spotlight. The U.S. Department of Agriculture lists them among the featured items of both the April and May lists of plentiful foods. Here's the lineup for this month and next. April: Eggs, beef, fish, oranges and orange juice, grapefruit, peanuts and peanut products. May: Eggs, orange juice, beef and potatoes.

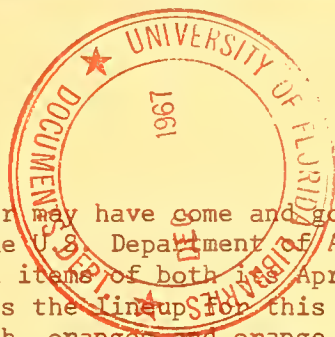
Handle Eggs with Care. To protect the high quality of the eggs you buy, keep them cold. Avoid leaving them in a hot car--or in a hot kitchen, for that matter--for any length of time. Extreme variations in temperatures, or lengthy exposure to high temperatures, can lower the quality of eggs.

Which End Up? Eggs should be stored big end up. It keeps the yolks centered, say poultry specialists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And here's another tip. Store eggs in the paper carton in which you bought them. The covering retards moisture loss and helps prevent absorption of odors.

At the Supermarket. Where did you buy that tube of toothpaste, bottle of aspirin, can of hair spray? There's a fifty-fifty chance it was at your grocery store. Nearly 20 percent of each week's "grocery" bill goes for non-food items, say U.S. Department of Agriculture food economists.

Frank Facts. If you want to know the facts, Ma'am, read the label on the meats you buy. On frankfurters, for example, look for the U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection mark. If the product is produced in a plant selling across State lines, the mark will be there. It's required by law. The mark guarantees wholesomeness and that not more than 3.5 percent of the weight of the frank is cereals and/or nonfat dry milk. While some filler may be required to process the product properly, more filler means less meat for your money. USDA inspection prevents this.

Don't Eat the Leaves. Don't eat the leaves of rhubarb. The succulent stalks are excellent for sauces and pies. The leaves, however, are poisonous. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, rhubarb leaves contain amounts of oxalic acid and of oxalates sometimes great enough to cause the fatal poisoning of those who eat them.



Shopping Tip. Buying lettuce this week-end? Don't go for the firmest head. It may not be the best. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says a head of iceberg lettuce should be firm but not solid--maybe even a little loose. Also, look for heads with green outer leaves. The greener the lettuce, the more vitamins you get.

Dining Out. More money in your pocket. More meals eaten out. That's been the pattern of U.S. food spending in recent years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In 1955, families spent about \$5 a week for snacks and meals away from home; in 1965, about \$6. But that's the average family. A lot depends on income. At \$3,000 or less a year, a family spends only \$2 a week for food away from home. Over \$10,000 this figure jumps to \$14.

YARD AND GARDEN

Color It Green With Trees. As colorful as its name, this booklet offers home owners, amateur gardeners and others interested in the beautification program a calendar of activities to improve and protect America's ornamental and shade trees. It's based on USDA research findings. In spring and fall there are planting tips, in summer how-to-water information, in winter suggestions to prevent snow damage. You'll find this full-color publication not only informative but beautiful as well--a creditable contribution to the very program it promotes. For a free copy write to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Please include your zip code and request on a postcard.

Windowsill Greenhouse. Program chairman of your garden club? Then here's just the thing for an interesting activity session. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a color slide set with how-to-do-it instructions for taking cuttings from philodendrons, geraniums, hollies, mockorange, azaleas, yews, junipers--you name it! The slide set, together with a demonstration in which everyone can participate, makes an excellent garden club program almost any time of the year. Cuttings may be taken from foliage plants all year round; garden flowers from late May to September; flowering shrubs and broadleaved evergreens, mid-June to mid-August; conifers, January to early February. The 38 slides take your audience step-by-step through the program. They cost only \$5.50. They may be purchased from: The Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A filmstrip also is available for \$5 from Photo Lab Inc., 3825 Georgia Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011.

Figure the Percentages. When buying a mixed bag of lawn seed, don't be confused by the percentages on the package. Figure the size of the seed before you jump to conclusions. A pound package of mixed lawn seed may contain only 5 percent Kentucky bluegrass, yet in that 5 percent may be nearly 110,000 tiny seeds (each a potential blade of grass). Compare this with the other percentages in the mix. Twenty percent red fescue will give you 109,000 seeds. Forty percent ryegrass, only 90,000, and 30 percent Kentucky 31, a scant 68,000 seeds. What about the other 5 percent in the package? That's inert material--and possibly a few weed seeds.

Don't Get Stung. You've got to be sneaky to kill wasps--and not get stung. Get rid of them at night, say U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists. Spray the insecticide directly into the nest. Then, if it's a ground nest, toss on a shovelful of moist soil to prevent the wasps from escaping and birds, pets and children from getting into the insecticide. A new 8-page booklet tells all about wasps--and that includes hornets, yellow jackets, Polistes, mud daubers and the cicada killer. You may order from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Ask for G-122, "Controlling Wasps." Send 5 cents and your name, address and zip code.

Booklets for Yard and Garden. If you want a better lawn, a prettier garden, and a "greener thumb" with flowers, shrubs and trees, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has the publications to get you started. All are based on USDA research. Pick the ones you think will be most useful. Order from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Send check or money order--no stamps.

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| G 25 | Roses for the home | \$0.15 |
| G 51 | Better Lawns | .15 |
| G 53 | Lawn Insects: How to Control Them | .15 |
| G 65 | Growing Chrysanthemums in the Home Garden | .05 |
| G 66 | Growing Iris in the Home Garden | .05 |
| G 71 | Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons | .05 |
| G 79 | Controlling Lawn Weeds with Herbicides | .10 |
| G 80 | Home Propagation of Ornamental Trees and Shrubs | .10 |
| G 83 | Pruning Shade Trees and Repairing Their Injuries | .10 |
| G 86 | Growing Camellias | .10 |
| G 88 | Growing the Flowering Dogwood | .05 |
| G 89 | Selecting Fertilizers for Lawns and Gardens | .05 |
| G 91 | Growing Flowering Annuals | .10 |
| G 102 | Iron Deficiency in Plants: How to Control It in Yards and Gardens | .15 |
| G 104 | Protecting Shade Trees During Home Construction | .05 |
| G 114 | Growing Flowering Perennials | .15 |
| G 117 | Trees for Shade and Beauty: Their Selection and Care | .10 |
| G 120 | Growing Boxwoods | .10 |
| L 439 | Spring-Flowering Bulbs | .05 |

Bogus Blossoms. Take another look. That rare begonia on the florist's shelf may well be a common species of polyethylene. Eight out of 10 U.S. florists sell artificial plants and flowers along with fresh ones, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports. Two out of five purchases of the artificial blooms are for home use.

IN THE HOME

Protecting Woolens. It's that time of year again--when you put away your woolies and dig out summer cottons. And, as usual, the question of what to do about moths pops up. An eight-page booklet put out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture answers the question for you. It pictures--in living color--the bugs you should look out for: the black carpet beetle, the furniture carpet beetle and the webbing clothes moth. You can see them as larva, pupa and adult, and, in the case of the moths, as cocoons. How to keep these pests away from your house and how to handle them should they come visiting is explained in detail. The booklet is free from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for "Protecting Woolens against Clothes Moths and Carpet Beetles," G-113.

Enlightened. The size of the glass bowl on your lamp pretty much determines how big a bulb you can use, say lighting specialists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A bowl with a 6-inch top can take a 100-watt bulb; an 8-inch bowl, 150 watts; 9 1/4 inches, 200 watts; 10 inches, 300 watts. Plastic bowls, however, may discolor at this wattage. Use ~~the~~ next smaller size bulb for each of these sizes if your reflector is plastic.

SALUTE TO SENIOR CITIZENS

Don't Count Oldsters Out. We could have 20 States with population all aged 65 years and over. We could, but we don't. Instead, these senior citizens are spread over the entire nation--some 2,242,000 of them. Many make valuable contributions to their communities. Does your town need willing people to help carry out civic projects? Encourage your senior citizens to take part. They can also offer the experience, talent and skills needed, but so often hard to find. Here are some ways "oldsters" can and do contribute: Operation Green Thumb where older low-income people help beautify highways; as VISTA workers (about 450 of the 3,100 VISTA volunteers are over the age of 60); as foster grandparents; as home health aides.

May is Senior Citizens Month, the time the Nation pays special tribute to its older people. Why not include them in your community activities?

CONFERENCE

Soil, Water and Suburbia. "The quality of living for millions of Americans at the turn of the 20th into the 21st century will be determined largely by the quality of the planning and developing of suburbia fringe areas in the years immediately ahead." With these words Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Robert C. Weaver point up the critical problems created by our rapidly growing urban development. To seek solutions of land and water management problems in suburban development, a national conference has been called for June 15 and 16 at the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. Invited are land developers, investors, planners, architects, engineers, scientists, and State, county and municipal leaders.

IN THE KITCHEN

A Cup of Flour. The recipe reads: 1 cup of flour. Do you follow it? Not if you're using instant flour, say USDA researchers. When baking with instant flour, remove two level tablespoons out of each cup of flour listed in the recipe. If you don't--as perhaps you have already discovered--your popovers won't pop properly; your cream puff won't puff, and your muffins will be heavy. In pastries, add a little extra fat. It will help overcome the tendency of instant flour to soak up water. Whatever you do, don't try to even things up by adding more water. You'll ruin whatever you're making.

Beef and Veal in Family Meals. Cuts of meat have different names in different parts of the country--even from store to store in the same town. Learn to identify meat cuts by their appearance. Look at the bones. They are an excellent guide to cut and cooking method. T-bone, rib, pin, flat and wedge bones indicated relatively tender beef, good for broiling and roasting. The round bones, arm and blade bones occur in less tender cuts that need to be braised or pot roasted. This fact--and many more--are found in "Beef and Veal in Family Meals," a new USDA consumer publication. To illustrate the various cuts of beef and veal, there are four and a half pages of actual photos. The booklet, designed to tell consumers how to buy, store and prepare beef and veal, also offers 6 pages of recipes. Copies may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The price: 15 cents.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Jeanne S. Park, Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.